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**Sussex County
Government**

News Release

Sussex County carolers, groups collect more than 26,000 food items for those in need

Georgetown, Del., Dec. 3, 2012: Sussex County's food pantries will be a little more full this holiday season thanks to hearts full of good cheer.

More than 750 carolers sang in the holidays during the 29th annual Caroling on The Circle event Monday night, Dec. 3, singing traditional and Spanish carols and, along the way, doing their part to help collect more than 26,000 canned goods and other non-perishable food items for the less fortunate of the community.

The event each year kicks off the holiday season for Sussex County, while serving as a community food drive to benefit local pantries. Started in 1984 as part of the Delaware First initiative, Caroling on The Circle continues to cheer hearts and help those in need nearly three decades later. To date, the community has donated more than 600,000 canned goods through the Caroling on The Circle program in its 29-year history.

Monday night's Caroling event, along with collections from Sussex County Council, County employees, numerous schools, groups and businesses, helped this year's preliminary total to top 26,000, down slightly from the 29,000 items collected in 2011. The collection effort, however, will continue through the end of this month, so the final number could go higher.

County Administrator Todd F. Lawson said the Caroling on The Circle food drive's 'Pack the POD' campaign has been another success. The County once again set up a 14-foot-by-7-foot

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Sussex County collects canned goods for the needy PODS storage trailer on The Circle to serve as a focal point for Caroling and heighten awareness about the food drive.

“We’re thankful for the outpouring of support our community has shown tonight. Once again, Sussex Countians, as they have for the past three decades, have shown how large their hearts really are, even when their wallets might be a bit smaller and thinner,” Mr. Lawson said. “These donations will go a long way toward helping thousands of less fortunate residents right here in Sussex County.”

Mr. Lawson said because the need in the community continues to stretch local food pantry programs, the County will again extend its collection effort through the end of December in order to maximize donation totals. The public can drop off canned goods and non-perishable food items between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at the County Administrative Offices building on The Circle or the West Complex offices on U.S. 113, both in Georgetown.

Mr. Lawson thanked the public and those in attendance at Monday night’s event, and acknowledged several participating groups. Those included County Council, County employees, Steve Class/Colonial East, the Delaware Manufactured Home Owners Association, First State Manufactured Housing Association, Fuqua, Yori & Willard, Little Einstein Preschool, PATS Aircraft Systems, the Punkin’ Chunkin’ Association, Sussex County Association of REALTORS®, Beacon Middle, Georgetown Elementary, Georgetown Middle, H.O. Brittingham Elementary, Howard T. Ennis, Long Neck Elementary, Milton Elementary, North Georgetown Elementary, the Sussex Academy of Arts & Sciences, and Sussex Technical High schools.

Items collected will be donated to approximately one dozen area pantries, shelters and church organizations for distribution within Sussex County.

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